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**China Opens its Market to Imports of U.S. Citrus, Meat, and Wheat**

United States Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky and United States Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman announced today that China has issued new rules governing the importation of U.S. citrus, meat and poultry, and wheat. These rules, issued as "circulars" by the Chinese Government, mark final implementation of the Agreement on U.S.-China Agricultural Cooperation, signed between the United States and China last April.

"With today's announcement, China has taken the final step to implement the bilateral agreement on agriculture signed last year," said Ambassador Barshefsky. "This means China is now fully positioned to purchase U.S. meat and citrus and continue to expand its purchases of Pacific Northwest wheat. This Agreement signifies a new era in our bilateral agricultural relationship, one that is based on sound science and the mutual benefits of open markets. U.S. farmers, ranchers, and consumers will benefit substantially from this agreement."

Secretary Glickman stated, "Final implementation of this agreement is a fundamental breakthrough for American's farmers and ranchers. By opening their doors to American citrus meat and wheat products, China is providing our producers with the tremendous opportunity to significantly increase export sales to the world's most populous country. U.S. exporters will now be able to form meaningful relationships with Chinese importers and develop the Chinese market for U.S. citrus, wheat and meat. Trade is essential for American agriculture and the ability to continue growing our exports is essential to the viability of American farmers and ranchers in the future."

**Background:**

The Agreement on U.S.-China Agricultural Cooperation, signed on April 10, 1999, lifted the ban on the export of citrus from Arizona, California, Florida and Texas, allowing the U.S. to develop legitimate commercial channels for U.S. citrus exports to China, which will reduce risk and permit exporters to market their products legally. Removal of the phytosanitary restrictions will translate into a direct increase in exports of U.S. citrus.

This agreement allows the United States to export U.S. citrus based on U.S. national standards. The export program will be phased in over an interim period of two years, in terms of which counties in Florida and California can participate. During this period, the approved counties will be able to ship citrus that is produced in areas that are free of fruit flies and from areas outside of a 20 kilometer zone around fruit fly outbreaks. After two years, fruit from all counties can be shipped based on the U.S. National Program Guidelines.

Under the Agreement China agreed to recognize the U.S. certification system for meat and poultry. As with citrus, this agreement will allow exporters to develop legal, commercial relationships for U.S. meat and poultry.

China has banned imports of U.S. wheat and other grains from the Pacific Northwest for over 26 years for scientifically unjustified reasons. In signing this agreement, China has acknowledged that TCK smut does not pose a risk to China's domestic wheat production, and will allow the import of U.S. wheat and other grain that is at or below a specific tolerance for TCK (30,000 spores per 50 grams).